

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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January 17, 2008

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Philip L. Browning, Director

SUBJECT: REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM FOR THE HOMELESS, ELDERLY, AND DISABLED USING ELECTRONIC BENEFIT (EBT) CARDS TO PURCHASE PREPARED MEALS (BOARD ORDER #38 - FEBRUARY 4, 2003)

This is to provide you with an update on the Restaurant Meals Program for Homeless, Elderly, and Disabled Food Stamp Participants using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards to purchase prepared meals. As you may recall, the Restaurant Meals Program allows homeless, elderly, and disabled Food Stamp participants to purchase prepared meals using their EBT cards at restaurants that have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the County and have been certified by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to accept Food Stamp benefits.

The Restaurant Meals Program for the Homeless, Elderly and Disabled has experienced substantial growth since implementation in July of 2005. Currently, we have 325 signed MOUs, including 224 restaurants participating in the program, and another 101 restaurants in various stages of processing by the USDA, FNS and DPSS.

During the past 12 months, there has been a continuous increase in program participation and utilization as a result of the following campaign strategies:

- Making presentations to district staff and community partners.
- Working with restaurant owners to develop a strong relationship.
- Mailing Restaurant Meals Program brochures and interest letters to restaurants in communities neighboring District Offices.

The chart shown below includes Restaurant Meals Data from December 2006 through November 2007. Since my last update in June, there has been a continuous increase in Restaurant Meals Program participation. The number of sales transactions for November 2007 increased by 185% since June 2007, and the amount of sales increased by 188% for the same period. Over the past 12 months, the number of transactions increased by 390% and the amount of sales transactions increased by 385%.

RESTAURANT MEALS PROGRAM DATA

MONTH AND YEAR	NUMBER OF SALES TRANSACTIONS	NUMBER OF RESTAURANTS WITH TRANSACTIONS	AMOUNT OF SALES	AVERAGE TRANSACTION AMOUNT
December 2006	7686	150	\$59,191.00	\$ 7.70
January 2007	9,698	163	\$71,878.00	\$ 7.41
February 2007	9,423	167	\$76,079.00	\$ 8.07
March 2007	11,921	182	\$ 93,429.00	\$ 7.84
April 2007	13,770	184	\$100,529.00	\$ 7.26
May 2007	15,736	182	\$115,665.00	\$ 7.35
June 2007	16,217	188	\$121,204.00	\$ 7.47
July 2007	18,067	186	\$134,211.00	\$ 7.42
August 2007	19,331	190	\$145,796.00	\$ 7.45
September 2007	20,311	198	\$160,361.00	\$ 7.90
October 2007	23,054	199	\$179,664.00	\$ 7.79
November 2007	29,940	204	\$228,097.00	\$ 7.61

Discussions with McDonalds' Corporate Offices and Taco Bell have been put on hold while recent internal issues with their offices are being resolved. MOUs were recently signed with several Domino's and Papa John Pizza franchises.

In the coming months, my staff will develop additional strategies to:

- Recruit and retain restaurants in underserved areas of the county; and
- Increase the program participation of the homeless.

Our goal is to provide participants with a variety of meal choices.

I will provide you with our next semi-annual report in July 2008.

PLB:bs

c: Chief Executive Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors